

## **Slovak automotive production could triple by 2010**

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Already a home to Volkswagen and PSA Peugeot Citroen, Slovakia's already surging automotive industry could nearly triple output by the end of the decade. Hyundai, Bridgestone, Rover, Mazda, Honda and Toyota are all eyeing Slovakia for future investments.

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Slovakia manufactures over 225,000 cars a year with a potential annual production of 750,000 cars sometime in 2010. Volkswagen is currently the only major carmaker assembling vehicles in Slovakia. As of 2006, French PSA Peugeot Citroen will initially produce 300,000 cars at its 700-million-euro plant. The number three potential car producer is the South Korean carmaker Hyundai Motor Company. Slovakia is competing with Poland to be the location of 1.1 billion EUR European production center with 700 employees. The decision will be made by February 2004, but Slovakia is hoping this will be its largest win for automobile production.

According to foreign sources, three unspecified potential investors are eyeing Slovakia - Mazda, Honda and Toyota of Japan. In addition, Slovakia is in preliminary talks with the British carmaker MG Rover over a new EUR 200 million plant in central Europe. Rover allegedly aims to produce up to 100,000 cars a year. Also, there are negotiations over a EUR 30 million plant with Japanese tire manufacturer Bridgestone. No further details are available. Bridgestone, Japan's biggest tire maker, is rumored to be seeking a location in Central Europe to manufacture tires for its contracted European customers, including German owned Volkswagen, which operates one of its largest production facilities in Slovakia.